

**General Plan Figure B –
Victoria Avenue Forever Letter**

Victoria Avenue Forever

...a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation

February 4, 2005

Riverside City Planning Commission c/o
City of Riverside Planning Department
3900 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92522

Victoria Avenue Forever is greatly concerned about the potential impact of traffic circulation improvements on the historic fabric of Victoria Avenue, as related to the new General Plan. As you know, Victoria Avenue is a priceless historic and aesthetic treasure that is both a City Landmark and a listed historic resource on the National Register of Historic Places. To help assure Victoria Avenue is not negatively impacted by the new General Plan, Victoria Avenue Forever has attended the General Plan Citizen Advisory Committee meetings and has been in regular contact with City staff. On January 26, 2005, the Victoria Avenue Forever Board of Directors met with City Staff at VAF Treasurer Hal Snyder's home. Representing the City were Diane Jenkins, Fran Dunajski, Tom Boyd, and Patricia Castillo. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a list of concerns sent to the City earlier this year. To facilitate the meeting, staff emailed its response to those concerns so we could see, in advance, areas of agreement and disagreement. Attached to this letter is the list of concerns and staff's initial response to those concerns. The following is a summary of City staff's further clarification of its response to VAF's concerns:

Concern 1: City staff clarified that Policy LU-11.2 refers to a parkway system that would be a component of the "Riverside Park" concept. While many of the streets listed are major traffic carriers, the emphasis is on the value of these streets as pedestrian corridors with a landscaped, park-like treatment. Staff assured us *that the purpose of Victoria Avenue being included in this parkway system is to recognize its value as a landscaped linear feature*, and not to treat it as a major traffic carrier. Staff agreed to insert the word "pedestrian" before the word "parkway" in this policy.

Concern 2: Victoria Avenue Forever agrees with the revised wording proposed for Policy LU-13.2, except we believe it needs to be clarified that it refers to the extension of Overlook Parkway west of Washington Street. *Staff agreed to insert "west of Washington Street" after "Overlook Parkway" in the first part of this policy.* Staff has previously assured VAF that the General Plan will state that any connection of Overlook Parkway across the Alessandro Arroyo will NOT occur until the completion of BOTH a specific plan for the extension AND all improvements to the 91 Freeway.

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Concern 3: We agree with the revised wording proposed by staff to policy LU-15.1. Accordingly, it is our understanding that this policy refers to the beautification of the Van Buren/Victoria intersection as entry point to the City. ***The policy is not intended to imply that Victoria Avenue be used as a major traffic carrier into the City.*** Staff assured the VAF Board that it would be invited to comment on any plans for this intersection, including those related to beautification and traffic carrying improvements.

Concern 4: Staff reassured us that the rescinding of the Victoria Avenue Specific Plan, per policy LU-28.11, will be followed by the preparation and adoption of an overlay zone for Victoria Avenue that will include all pertinent standards in the existing Specific Plan and in the policies approved by the City Council in November of 2003. In the time between the adoption of the General Plan and the adoption of an overlay zone, the November 2003 policies will be used. Staff acknowledged the conflict in the November 2003 policies as to which body, Planning Commission or Cultural Heritage Board, would have review jurisdiction over Avenue improvements. Staff agreed review authority is that of the Cultural Heritage Board. Staff also assured VAF that it would be invited to comment during the preparation of the overlay zone. ***The VAF Board urges that the overlay zone be made a top implementation priority following the adoption of the plan.***

Concerns 5 and 6: Staff and VAF disagree on these concerns relating to policies CCM-2.14 and CCM-4.3. ***VAF strongly believes the General Plan should allow LOS E at any Victoria intersection when necessary to preserve the Avenue's historic integrity.*** We appreciate, however, the clarification that the intersections of Victoria Avenue with Central, Arlington, Van Buren, and La Sierra do qualify for the exception allowing LOS E at peak traffic times.

Concern 7: Covered by the response to concerns 2, 5, and 6.

Concern 8: Staff and VAF disagree on this item. ***VAF strongly feels there should be a policy prohibiting future traffic signals on Victoria Avenue.*** Further, VAF believes underpasses should be used in lieu of traffic signals.

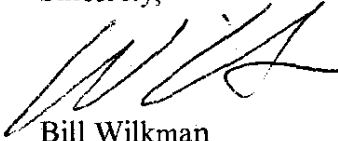
Concern 9: Covered by the response to concern 4.\

In summary, we request that, in addition to the changes already agreed to by City Staff, the following changes be made to the General Plan, with regard to the historic section of Victoria Avenue.

- 1. Add a policy allowing any intersection to operate at Level of Service E if necessary to preserve Victoria Avenue's historic character.***
- 2. Add a policy prohibit any further traffic signals on Victoria Avenue.***
- 3. Add a policy to call for the Overlook crossing of Victoria Avenue to occur via an underpass with no connections to the Avenue.***

Victoria Avenue Forever thanks the Planning Commission for its consideration of our concerns. Victoria Avenue is one of the important treasures that make Riverside the special place it is today. Together we can help assure Riverside's unique character is preserved for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Wilkman', written over the printed name.

Bill Wilkman
President, Victoria Avenue Forever

VICTORIA AVENUE FOREVER
DRAFT GENERAL PLAN REVIEW
LIST OF CONCERNS
January 4, 2005

- 1 Policy LU-11.2 reads as follows:

*Recognize Victoria Avenue, Magnolia Avenue/
Market Street, University Avenue, Van Buren
Boulevard, Riverwalk Parkway, La Sierra Avenue,
Canyon Crest Drive and Overlook Parkway as the
fundamental elements of the City's parkway network.*

Concern: This policy seems to emphasize Victoria Avenue as a traffic carrier. The character of Victoria Avenue is completely different from the other listed streets. VAF requests Victoria Avenue not be included in this policy.

2. Policy LU-13.2 reads as follows:

*Intersection improvements on Victoria Avenue
related to the extension of Overlook Parkway shall
be permitted only where a Level of Service of "D"
or better can be maintained. All improvements
shall be designed to sensitively reflect the Avenue's
historic character.*

Concern: This is somewhat confusing. Are we saying Victoria Avenue must have Level of Service D intersections as related to Overlook Parkway? The General Plan allows LOS E elsewhere. Why place a higher traffic carrying standard on the City's only roadway listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We feel the design of Victoria Avenue intersections should be driven, first, by sensitive design oriented toward protecting the Avenue's historic integrity.

3. Policy LU-15.1 reads as follows:

*Utilize the intersection of Van Buren Boulevard and
Victoria Avenue as a key access point to the City's
parkways.*

Concern: This is somewhat confusing. Are we saying we want Victoria Avenue to be a major gateway traffic carrier? Again, the emphasis should be on preserving Victoria Avenue's historic integrity, not maximizing its traffic carrying capacity.

4. Policy LU-28.11 reads as follows:

*Rescind the Victoria Avenue and Hawarden Hills
Specific Plans as part of this General Plan.*

Concern: This policy does not indicate what these specific plans will be replaced with. Presumably the new plan approved by the City Council on November 12, 2003 would replace the Victoria Avenue Specific Plan. For clarification, this should be stated in the policy. Also, with regard to the Council approved plan. VAF notes that there is a conflict between bullet 5 under VICTORIA AVENUE BETWEEN MYRTLE AND LA SIERRA

AVENUES and bullet 3 under VICTORIA AVENUE SOUTHWEST OF WASHINGTON STREET TO LA SIERRA AVENUE. One places driveways under the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission and the other places driveways under the jurisdiction of the Cultural Heritage Board. We would like this document to be revised to make it clear that the Cultural Heritage Board has jurisdiction over all improvements in the right-of-way along Victoria Avenue as well as private improvements fronting onto the Avenue. As a Cultural Heritage Landmark, Title 20 requires the CHB to review and approve all improvements.

5. Policy CCM-2.3 reads as follows:

Maintain LOS D or better on Arterial Streets wherever possible. At key locations, such as City Arterials that are used by regional freeway bypass traffic and at heavily traveled freeway interchanges, allow LOS E at peak hours as the acceptable standard on a case-by-case basis.

Concern: We would this policy and related policies in the GP to allow Victoria Avenue's intersections to operate at LOS E when necessary to protect the Avenue's historic integrity.

6. Policy CCM-2.14 reads as follows:

Ensure that intersection improvements on Victoria Avenue are limited to areas where Level of Service is below the City standard of D. Allow only the minimum necessary improvements in recognition of Victoria Avenue's historic character.

Concern: This policy seems to contradict policy LU 13.2. Again, as noted above, we believe Victoria Avenue's historic status should be justification for allowing its intersections to function at LOS E when necessary to protect the Avenue's historic integrity.

7. Policy CCM-4.3 reads as follows:

Ensure that LOS D or better is maintained along Victoria Avenue for intersections related to the Overlook Parkway extension. For more information on Victoria Avenue see LU-11 and CCM-2.14.

Concern: Same as number 5 above.

8. The Board is concerned about the impact of traffic signals on Victoria Avenue. We would like to see a policy added to the General Plan to the effect that no new signals will be added to the Avenue.
9. The Board is concerned that the new policy document for Victoria Avenue does not omit important policies and design standards from the old Specific Plan. We would appreciate it if you could bring copies of the previous Victoria Avenue Specific Plan and the new policy document and explain how the two compare and contrast.

City of Riverside Planning Department
Response to Comments by Victoria Avenue Forever on the Draft General Plan 2025
January 25, 2005

Following are the Planning Department's responses to VAF comments dated January 4, 2005. The Public Works Department was consulted in formulating the responses.

1. The intent of Policy LU-11.2 is not to emphasize Victoria Avenue's role as a traffic carrier. The policy speaks more to the visual character of these streets as part of the Riverside Park concept. To clarify this issue the Planning Department proposes to modify the policy to read as follows:

"Recognize Victoria Avenue, Magnolia Avenue/Market Street, University Avenue, Van Buren Boulevard, Riverwalk Parkway, La Sierra Avenue, Canyon Crest Drive and Overlook Parkway as the fundamental elements of the City's parkway network and components of Riverside Park."

2. The Planning Department proposes the following revision to Policy LU-13.2 to address VAF's concern.

"Intersection improvements on Victoria Avenue related to the extension of Overlook Parkway shall be permitted only where a Level of Service of "D" or better can be maintained determined in conjunction with a specific plan to be prepared for Overlook Parkway between Alessandro Boulevard and the 91 Freeway. The specific plan shall address the crossing of the Alessandro Arroyo, traffic calming measures necessary to protect local streets in the area and the extension of Overlook Parkway westerly of Washington Street to the 91 Freeway. Acceptable levels of service of intersection(s) on Victoria Avenue related to the extension of Overlook Parkway shall be determined as part of the specific plan process. In any event, all improvements shall be designed to sensitively reflect the Victoria Avenue's historic character."

We believe this change is consistent with the recommendations of the CAC.

3. The Planning Department proposes the following revision to Policy LU-15.1 to address VAF's concern.

"Utilize the intersection of Van Buren Boulevard and Victoria Avenue as a key access point highly landscaped, visual gateway into the City's parkways."

4. The Implementation Plan contains actions to implement the Victoria Avenue Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations approved in November 2003. The VAF was represented on the Committee. Copies of the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations and the Specific Plan recommendations will be made available at the meeting with VAF.

5. This policy is a recommendation of the Citizen Advisory Committee, which the staff supports. Victoria Avenue intersections should maintain a level of service D or better, with the possible exception of intersections related to Overlook Parkway, which would be decided as part of the specific plan. Any future intersection improvements along Victoria Avenue would be subject to separate environmental review and be required to be sensitive to the historic character of the Avenue.

6. The revision proposed to LU-13.2 eliminates any contradiction. The policy is as approved by the CAC and staff concurs. See #5.

7. See #2.

8. Staff does not support this proposed policy, and believes this matter should be decided on a case specific basis.

9. See #4.